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"I have the pleasure of greeting all of the participants of the largest navy training on the Baltic Sea," President Ilves said. "The BALTOPS is a historical exercise, as it is not only the largest but also perhaps the longest running exercise on the Baltic Sea, now in its 39th year."

According to the Estonian Head of State, BALTOPS is a good example of the successful rearrangement of NATO's defence traditions characteristic of the Cold War period to meet today's security situation.

"Who would have guessed, just twenty years ago, that units of Estonia and the United States of America would be organising a joint landing exercise on the northern shores of Estonia," President Ilves said.

The USA and countries located around the Baltic Sea, 12 countries in all, are participating in the BALTOPS navy exercise. Training, involving the landing and reception of the allied forces, will be organised this year for the first time in Estonia and Latvia within the framework of the exercise. Approximately 1,500 defence force members from Estonia, the United States of America and NATO staff will participate in the Estonian stage of BALTOPS.

In the course of today's exercise, the united unit of the marines and the Defence League reached the coast near Loksa Harbour from the US navy ship Gunston Hall, using Amtrak amphibians. The MIG-29 fighter planes of the Polish Air Forces, which are currently conducting air surveillance in the Baltic states, conducted an overflight during the landing process.

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